

## Private Archibald Richard Sydney James Bellinger<sup>©</sup>

Regimental number: 442

32nd Battalion, Australian Infantry Force

born: 17 February 1888–died: 20 July 1916

Archibald Richard Sydney James Bellinger was born on 17 February 1888 in Millicent, South Australia, the sixth of 14 children born to Arthur Hermann Bellinger and his wife Annie, née Bateman.<sup>1</sup> The others were Rosaville Annie (b. 1879),<sup>2</sup> Susan Florence (b. 1880),<sup>3</sup> William Fowler George (b. 1881),<sup>4</sup> Arthur Herbert (b. 1882),<sup>5</sup> Thomas Henry Clinton (b. 1883),<sup>6</sup> Euphemia Isabel Ada (b. 1889),<sup>7</sup> Albert Charles Angus (b. 1891),<sup>8</sup> Ronald Edwin Parker (b. 1896),<sup>9</sup> Edith Daisy (b. 1897),<sup>10</sup> Grace Henrietta (b. 1899),<sup>11</sup> Frederick Allan (b. 1901),<sup>12</sup> Douglas Melvill (b. 1903),<sup>13</sup> and Reginald John (b. 1904).<sup>14</sup>

Archibald's father Arthur was born in Tasmania, Australia, in 1844, the son of Thomas Bellinger and his wife Susannah, née Middleton.<sup>15</sup> Arthur moved to Millicent in 1863 when he was just 19.<sup>16</sup> He was the first butcher and blacksmith to open up business in the township. He was also the local poundkeeper,<sup>17</sup> grazier (one who raises sheep or cattle<sup>18</sup>) and member of the Millicent Racing Club,<sup>19</sup> and, for a while, owner of the Kintore Hotel, Furner.<sup>20</sup> He married Annie Bateman on 5 June 1878 in Millicent;<sup>21</sup> she was the daughter of Simeon Bateman, a colonist from Oxfordshire, England, who was one of the first settlers on the Millicent flats.<sup>22</sup>

Archibald followed in his father's footsteps by becoming the poundkeeper for Kennion District at age 21 in February 1909,<sup>23</sup> but in May 1910 he asked to be relieved of his duties.<sup>24</sup> At the time of his enlistment on 5 July 1915, he was listed as a farmer.<sup>25</sup>

Archibald enlisted in Keswick, South Australia, and was initially assigned to L Group, Base Infantry, but he was transferred on 16 August 1915 to B Company of the 32nd Battalion of the Australian Infantry Force. On 18 November 1915 he embarked from Adelaide with them on HMAT *Geelong* and arrived in Egypt on 18 December 1915 at Suez. On 12 April 1916, while training on the Duntroon Plateau, he was confined to barracks for two days for having "failed to have his blankets folded in the proper manner."

On 17 June 1916 Private Archibald Bellinger and his battalion embarked at Alexandria on HMT *Transylvania* to join the British Expeditionary Force in Europe. They disembarked a week later in Marseilles and travelled by train to Hazebrouck in Northern France, near the Belgian border. They then marched to the village of Morbeque, where they set up camp.<sup>26</sup>

It wasn't long before the 32nd Battalion saw heavy action in the Battle of Fromelles,<sup>27</sup> on 19 July 1916, just three days after entering the front-line trenches. The battle did not go well: no ground was gained, and the battalion suffered 718 casualties, almost 75% of its total strength. B Company alone lost 71 killed, 365 wounded and 219 missing.<sup>28</sup> Those killed included Private Archibald



Private Archibald Sydney Richard James Bellinger, 32nd Battalion, AIF.

Source: *Australian War Memorial*  
(<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1256136>)

Bellinger, who suffered a shrapnel wound to the head. He died of his wounds on 20 July 1916 at No. 1 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station at Bailleul<sup>29</sup> and was buried in the Bailleul Communal Cemetery Extension, Nord, Reference II. F. 17.<sup>30</sup> There is no inscription on his headstone. The cemetery lies in the east end of the town of Bailleul, in the Nord department of the Hauts-de-France region; it contains the remains of 4344 soldiers from the two world wars.

Archibald's father was notified of his son's death on 4 August 1916, according to an article in the local newspaper. The article commented that "the deceased soldier was the most popular member of the Bellinger family, and his services as pianist were often in request at social gatherings. He was born in the district and took an active interest in all sports and amusements in which the youthful members of the community engaged. The news of his death awakened sincere regret."<sup>31</sup>

Private Archibald Bellinger received the Victory Medal (for service in an operational theatre) and the British War Medal (for service overseas between 1914 and 1918) for his service. He also received the 1914–15 Star, for service in any theatre of the war in 1914–15.

Albert Charles Angus Bellinger also served during WW I. Three years younger than Archibald, Albert enlisted two months after him on 4 September 1915.<sup>32</sup> He was assigned to the 12th Reinforcements of the 9th Light Horse Regiment and served in Egypt and Palestine. He was hospitalized for mumps in 1916, for influenza in 1917, and for treatment of malaria in 1918 and 1919. He was promoted to lance corporal on 24 August 1918 and survived the war. He finally arrived home on 30 April 1919,<sup>33</sup> but he never fully recovered from the malaria.<sup>34</sup> He married Rita Mabel Evelyn Meyers in 1926<sup>35</sup> and died in 1943, leaving two daughters.<sup>36</sup>

Archie and Albert were apparently the only two of Arthur's sons who enlisted for WW I;<sup>37</sup> indeed, the three youngest, Frederick, Douglas and Reginald would have been too young. (However, they did enlist for WWII—see below.)

Archie's mother **Annie** had died before the war in 1910, of a consumptive ailment,<sup>38</sup> but his father **Arthur** lived until 1928.<sup>39</sup>

The oldest son, **William**, lived all his life in the Millicent and Furner districts, following the occupation of mixed farming. He married Agnes Ellen Gard in 1910 and had a large family of six sons and five daughters. He died in 1941.<sup>40</sup>

Second son **Arthur** also lived most of his life in the Millicent district and was also a farmer.<sup>41</sup> He married Annie Riley in 1914,<sup>42</sup> and they had three children. He died in 1950.<sup>43</sup>

Third son **Thomas** became a photographer in 1911<sup>44</sup> and later worked as a blacksmith.<sup>45</sup> He married Edith Lillian Lester in 1913<sup>46</sup> and died in 1965.<sup>47</sup>

Sixth son **Ronald** married Ethel Margaret Mudge in 1934 in Streaky Bay, South Australia<sup>48</sup> and lived there as a sheep shearer.<sup>49</sup> He died in 1977.<sup>50</sup>

**Frederick** was the poundkeeper for Furner but resigned in 1928.<sup>51</sup> He married Queenie Winnifred Erica Butler in 1933,<sup>52</sup> and settled in Streaky Bay, where he worked as a labourer.<sup>53</sup> On 18 April 1942 he enlisted in the army for World War II but was discharged three months later.<sup>54</sup> In 1950 he was working at a fish processing plant in Streaky Bay.<sup>55</sup> He died in 1972.<sup>56</sup>

**Douglas** became the poundkeeper in Furner in 1921<sup>57</sup> and married Isobel Victoria (“Kitty”) Manhood in Millicent in 1927.<sup>58</sup> Douglas enlisted in the army for World War II on 18 February 1941 as a driver and served until the end of the war.<sup>59</sup> He died in 1965.<sup>60</sup>

The youngest son, **Reginald**, also took on the position of poundkeeper at Furner, in 1922.<sup>61</sup> In 1932 he married Olive Kathleen Richardson,<sup>62</sup> and on 1 April 1942 he enlisted in the army, serving for almost two years before being discharged on 2 March 1944.<sup>63</sup> He died in 1963.<sup>64</sup>

The oldest daughter, **Rosaville Annie**, never married and died aged 82 in 1961.<sup>65</sup>

Second daughter **Susan Florence** married John Ferguson in 1911<sup>66</sup> and lived in Victoria as a farmer’s wife.<sup>67</sup> She died a widow in 1971, age 91.<sup>68</sup>

**Euphemia Isabel** married Austin Gower Smith in 1921,<sup>69</sup> and lived as a farmer’s wife in St. Arnaud, Victoria.<sup>70</sup> She died in 1983.<sup>71</sup>

**Edith Daisy** married Carl Boehm on 19 April 1922<sup>72</sup> and lived in Edwardstown, South Australia, as a teacher’s wife.<sup>73</sup> She died in 1966.<sup>74</sup>

The youngest daughter, **Grace Henrietta**, did not live long. She died at age 10 from meningitis, after ailing for a couple of years.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> “Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 January 2022), entry for Susan Florence Bellinger

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<sup>5</sup> “Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 January 2022), entry for Arthur Herbert Bellinger

<sup>6</sup> “Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 January 2022), entry for Thomas Henry Clinton Bellinger

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<sup>8</sup> “Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 January 2022), entry for Albert Charles Angus Bellenger [sic]

<sup>9</sup> “Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 January 2022), entry for Ronald Edwin Parker Bellinger

<sup>10</sup> “Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 January 2022), entry for Edith Daisy Bellenger [sic]

<sup>11</sup> “Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 January 2022), entry for Grace Henrietta Bellenger [sic]

<sup>12</sup> “Australia, Birth Index, 1788–1922,” *Ancestry* ([www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca): accessed 26 January 2022), entry for Frederick Allan Bellenger [sic]

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- <sup>54</sup> "Virtual War Memorial Australia," (<https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/561797>: accessed 6 February 2022), entry for Frederick Allen Bellenger [sic]
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